SENATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Meeting of Friday, February 19, 1993
Room BC-110, 14:00

Present: P. Bird, T. Bui (Chair), Chowdhury, S. Daigneault (recording secretary), P. Lightbown, D. Markiewicz, C. Suen, A. Williams

Absent: U. De Brentani, A.B. Ibrahim, C. Nero, P. Shizgal, A. Zaidi

Regrets: K. Lipke, T. Sankar, K. Thulasiraman

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1. Approval of Agenda.

The agenda was approved (L. Lightbown/P. Bird)

2. Approval of the Minutes of the January 22, 1993 meeting.

It was noted that the motion on the proposal for the restructuring of the ORS was moved by Peter Bird and seconded by T. Sankar.

3. Business arising from Minutes

In response to a question, the Chair explained that at the previous meeting of the SRC, he forgot that Dr. Ginter's document was already made available to the Task Force on the Enhancement of University-wide Research Support Services and Facilities. He apologises for the confusion this may create.

4. Report of the Chair

FCAR is reviewing all of its funding programmes from team grants to students scholarships. Some review process has been completed while others are still in progress. In the case of the centre grant programme, the opinion of the review committee is that FCAR should not fund mega centres which already have large operating budgets (over 4 or 5 M dollars) In these cases, a FCAR centre grant of about 150K to 200K is a small portion of the total operating budget of the centre. Due to limited resources, FCAR would like to see their centre grants being used for infrastructure to advance the centre, rather than for operational purposes.

5. Report of the Director, Office of Research Services

a. Ms. Williams informed the Committee that Mr. Y. Rousseau and Mrs. Girard from FCAR recently accepted an invitation to meet with members of the Faculty of Fine Arts. This meeting was held February 18th and was most helpful. The opportunity for doing team research was encouraged and ways and means of doing this type of team research peculiar to their discipline was discussed. The session was much appreciated and FCAR promised to consider some of the concerns expressed at the meeting.

b. NSERC held a Strategic grant meeting at Concordia, an invitation was issued to McGill and MacDonald College researchers to attend. Mr. Walter Vieira of NSERC outlined the Strategic Grant Programme in detail and discussed the changes in the programme. The session was well attended.

c. The Office held an FRDP workshop for new members recently. The purpose of this workshop was to explain to the new researchers how to budget the funds awarded to them, the information and forms required etc. A Research and Special Funds person also attended. Other matters such as preparing for their next grant application, justifying their budgets etc. were also discussed. The session was much appreciated by the researchers.

d. We recently received notification that the Fonds de Collectivité programme had been cancelled for this year. We notified the one or two researchers who were preparing a proposal.

e. The Advisory Committee for the Seagram Fund for Academic Innovation recently completed their deliberations for awarding this year's grants. A total of 31 applications were submitted, 5 were awarded; 4 from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and one from Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science. It is also important to note that the budget for Seagram's was tight this year. The available funds come from the interest on the capital donated by Seagram's, since we are now in our third year of this programme and still supporting some of the previous programmes, the availability of funds has diminished. It has been recommended that Seagrams be approached to consider providing an additional donation.

f. Concordia has recently been approached through Research Services to become a part of a special project started by FCAR called BELUGA. This project will develop a uniform electronic application and transmission format for research grant applications on a national basis. Five Granting Agencies will be included at this stage, they are; NSERC, SSHRC, MRC, FCAR and CQRS. Par II of this programme in addition to Concordia will include Laval, École Polytechnique, Ottawa, Carleton, McMaster and Winnipeg. ORS is excited about being part of this project and we will no doubt have an influence in the direction this project takes.

g. The overhead funds collected from research contracts for the 1992 year decreased about 21%. This is regrettable but a number of factors may have brought this about such as the recession, difficulty in getting researchers interested in contract activities etc.

6. Question Period

NONE

7. Report from the Senate Committee on Academic Planning and Priorities

The Chair stated that as a result of the recommendations coming from this committee, the University Senate has set up a Task Force on the enhancement of university-wide research supports, services and facilities chaired by Dr. Bertrand, and SCAPP has set up an Ad-hoc Committee on academic priority within the context of the five-year rolling budget, chaired by Dr. Parker. The Ad-hoc committee of SCAPP has sent its report to Senate and the SRC was asked to comment on the document. The Chair then asked for comments.

Dr. Bird indicated that he has sent to Dr. Sheinin a memo to the effect that in the planning and budgeting process, not only the Vice-Rector IRF should be involved as indicated in the document, but the Vice-Rector Services should be there as well since capital budget and capital costs seem to be very much relevant to the process. Any academic planning should involve capital expenditures and services.

The discussions centred around the issues related to the decision making process vis-à-vis the budget, the need to be specific on priorities and how priorities from units, faculties, SGS... will be prioritized in the university-wide context.

The SRC feels enthusiastic about this planning model and budget process which shows an openness in a consultative formulation. In general, the committee is satisfied with the proposed academic planning process which takes into account many of the recommendations in the document entitled 'Facilitative Processes for the Implementation of the Policy Document 'The Enhancement of Research at Concordia University'' submitted by this committee to the Senate in the spring of 1992. However, the committee feels that the description on page six of the document on the Budget Process did not exactly elucidate the proposed process. Specifically the committee was struck by the absence of the Vice-Rector Services at that point of the development of the budget process.

8. For information only:

a. Comments on "Politique des établissements universitaires du Québec relative aux subventions de recherche conjointe"

b. Minutes of the November 23, 1992 meeting of the Task Force on the Enhancement of University-Wide Research Support Services and Facilities

c. Letter from M. Kusy and T. Bui to the Secretary of State of Canada regarding Bill C93: Proposed legislation for merging the Canada Council and SSHRC.

9. Varia

The following motion was moved by D. Markiewitz and seconded by P. Bird: 'That Senate Research Committee extend congratulations to Dr. Elaine Newman and the Department of Biology for her outstanding achievement in receiving the Killam Research Fellowship'.

Motion was carried unanimously.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned. The next meeting scheduled for Friday, March 26, 1993 at 2:00 p.m.

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